

## **HUD-VASH Qs & As:**

These Qs & As serve as a supplement to the HUD-VASH Operating Requirements published in the Federal Register on May 6 and 19, 2008.

### **A. Eligibility Issues**

#### **1. If a veteran is interested in participating in the HUD-VASH program, whom should he or she contact?**

The case managers at the local Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMC) are responsible for referring eligible homeless veterans to the PHAs. Therefore, any interested homeless veteran should contact their local VAMC directly. HUD has posted a list of VAMCs and participating PHAs on the HUD website:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/vash/>.

#### **2. Does the PHA have any role in determining or verifying the veteran's homeless status?**

No, only the VA will make that determination.

#### **3. What responsibility does a PHA have to determine a family's eligibility to participate in the HUD-VASH program?**

After the VA refers an eligible homeless veteran to the PHA, the PHA will determine income eligibility and screen for lifetime sex-offender registrants.

#### **4. What if a family is over-income?**

As in the regular voucher program, the PHA must determine whether a family is income eligible prior to the provision of HUD-VASH assistance. If the family is over income based on the most recently published income limits for the family size, the family will be ineligible for HCV assistance. After admission, income limits do not apply.

#### **5. Can a PHA deny assistance to a HUD-VASH family that owes money to the PHA in connection with the Section 8 or public housing program?**

No, a PHA will not be able to deny admission to the HCV program to an otherwise eligible HUD-VASH family that previously participated in the PHA's HCV or public housing program (that presumably left owing money or was not in good standing). A PHA will only be able to screen for, and deny admission to, a family member that is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program.

**6. Under portability, can a receiving PHA deny admission to a HUD-VASH family?**

The answer above regarding screening applies to receiving PHAs as well as initial PHAs.

**7. What if a family member, other than the veteran, is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program?**

Unless the family member that is subject to lifetime registration under a state sex offender law is the homeless veteran, the remaining family member/s may be served if the family agrees to remove the sex offender from its family composition.

**8. Can the PHA deny admission to an adult family member, other than the veteran, based on the previous behavior of that family member? For example, the co-head was previously terminated from the PHA's voucher program for committing serious or repeated violations of the lease (e.g. non-payment of rent)?**

No. The prohibition against screening families for anything other than lifetime sex offender status, applies to all family members, not just the veteran. The HUD-VASH operating requirements state that, with the exception of screening to determine if any household member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program, the PHA does not have the authority to screen "potentially eligible families" or deny assistance in accordance with 982.552 or 982.553.

**9. What procedures must the PHA follow when adding a member to the assisted HUD-VASH family?**

The provisions of 24 CFR Section 982.551(h)(2) apply when a family members is added to the assisted HUD-VASH household after initial occupancy. Other than the birth, adoption or court-awarded custody of a child, any other family member must be approved by the PHA in accordance with its policies.

**B. Calculating Annual Income**

**1. Are benefits received under the VA's Incentive Therapy (IT) and Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) programs included in the calculation of a family's annual income?**

Yes. Income earned as a result of participating in the IT or CWT programs does not qualify for exclusion under the regulations (24 CFR Sections 5.609(c)(1) through (17)).

## **C. Ongoing Program Administration**

### **1. What if the family no longer needs case management?**

If a family no longer needs case management as determined by the VAMC, the family is still eligible for rental assistance under the HCV program. In cases where case management is no longer needed, the PHA could use one of its own vouchers, if available, to continue assisting this family and free up a voucher for another HUD-VASH eligible family. If a regular voucher is not available, the family would continue utilizing the HUD-VASH voucher. Please note that if a HUD-VASH voucher is switched from a HUD-VASH voucher to a regular voucher, the family is not subject to the PHA's waiting list because the family is already a participant in the PHA's HCV program.

### **2. Will veterans be able to use vouchers outside the jurisdiction of the PHA that issued the voucher? For example, if the VASH vouchers were provided to the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, will participants be able to live in a unit in LA County?**

Although in most cases, only one PHA was selected to partner with any given VAMC, the vouchers are intended for homeless veterans living anywhere within the jurisdiction of the servicing VAMC. Therefore, families are not required to find a unit within the jurisdiction of the issuing PHA. Families may live in surrounding jurisdictions under voucher portability provisions, with the only limitation being that the VAMC must be able to provide case management services. In all cases, the receiving PHA must bill the initial PHA.

### **3. Can a participant use a VASH voucher to move long distance? For example, a HUD-VASH family wants to move from California to Florida.**

This type of move is permissible if the Florida VAMC can serve the family and the PHA partnering with the VAMC in Florida has an available HUD-VASH voucher. In such cases, the receiving PHA must absorb the family.

### **4. What happens to the voucher if the homeless veteran dies?**

The voucher would remain with the remaining members of the tenant family. The PHA could use one of its own vouchers, if available, to continue assisting this family and free up a voucher for another HUD-VASH eligible family. If a regular voucher is not available, the family would continue utilizing the HUD-VASH voucher.

### **5. What happens to the voucher if there is a divorce?**

Since the set-aside of HUD-VASH vouchers is for veterans, the voucher must remain with the veteran in the case of a separation or divorce. This, in effect, would override the PHA's policies on how to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up (24 CFR Section 982.54(d)(11)).

**6. Can a HUD-VASH family participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program?**

Yes. HUD-VASH families are eligible to enroll in FSS. The focus of the FSS program is employment of the head of the FSS family. In developing the Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) for a veteran, the head of the FSS family, the FSS program coordinator will work with both the veteran and the veteran's VA case manager. This coordination will ensure that the plan is appropriate for the veteran, that it does not conflict with case management requirements or impose unrealistic burdens on the veteran and that it incorporates VA resources plus any additional resources available through the local FSS program. The FSS escrow account that accrues during the term of the FSS contract will be a valuable asset building tool for HUD-VASH participants.

Although a PHA may terminate the HCV assistance of an FSS program participant that fails to comply without good cause with the requirements of the FSS contract of participation, PHAs may choose not to exercise this option for HUD-VASH families participating in FSS.

**7. What safeguards has HUD put in place to ensure VASH funding continues to be available to homeless veterans upon turnover of a HUD-VASH voucher?**

HUD will track these vouchers in the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC) system, through an additional code (VASH) on the family report (Form HUD-50058).

**8. If a HUD-VASH family is denied assistance or has its assistance terminated is it entitled to an informal review and informal hearing, respectively?**

Yes. Families are entitled to an informal review or hearing in accordance with the PHA's administrative policies for denial and termination of assistance, and in accordance with 24 CFR 982.554 or 982.555, as applicable. This includes denial of admission due to the limited reasons noted in the Operating Requirements (over-income and the homeless veteran is a sex offender subject to lifetime registration under state law) and termination of assistance for failure to comply with program requirements including compliance with case management as determined by the VAMC case manager.

**D. Funding Issues**

**1. What administrative fee will be earned by participating PHAs?**

The PHA will earn the same administrative fee for HUD-VASH vouchers as it would for regular vouchers funded under the fiscal year 2008 HUD Appropriations Act.

**2. Will HUD-VASH vouchers be fully renewed?**

It is the Department's intent to fully renew all HUD-VASH vouchers. However, such renewals are always subject to Congressional appropriations.